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## **Non-fiction works examine life of Dr. King**

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Dr. Martin Luther King died 40 years ago this April, but his words endure as blueprints for social change. As the nation pauses to observe a holiday in his honor, there's no better time to reflect on the life of this remarkable American.

Born in 1929, King was not yet 40 when he was shot on a Memphis motel balcony in 1968, but in that short lifespan he did more than wage war against hate and social injustice. He was a pastor who earned a doctorate from prestigious Boston University at 26, his name was a household word within three years. Three years later he received the Nobel Peace Prize. A husband and father of four, he was also a prolific writer, creating more than 200,000 documents in his lifetime.

Catawba County Library System has a number of materials about King including biographies for both children and adults. As a major historic figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he is mentioned in a variety of histories of the American Civil Rights Movement, among them Frye Gaillard's 2004 narrative, *Cradle of Freedom* (323.1196 GAI) and Nick Kotz's 2005 history, *Judgment Days* (323.0922 KOT) which examines the alliance between two southerners--Lyndon Johnson and King-- to bring about the Civil Rights and Voting Rights acts.

For snippets of King's wisdom, the *Martin Luther King Companion* offers quotations from his speeches and essays. Selected by widow Coretta Scott King, the collection fills 100 pages.

"For years now I have heard the word 'Wait!'" King wrote. "It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never,' .... We should never forget that

everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was ‘legal’ and everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in Hungary was ‘illegal.’” Both passages are from his famous *Letter from Birmingham Jail*.

A deeper look at King’s role in the Civil Rights struggle can be found in *At Canaan’s Edge* (323.1196 BRA), an historical narrative about America during the King years by Taylor Branch, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author. Both the book and audiotape are available through the county library system.

For more information, call 465-8665.